INTERESTING STRANGERS

by

Kimberly Britt
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FADE IN:

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A bare bones room with bland white walls. Someone lies in the twin sized bed, completely concealed by a blanket.

An alarm BLARES annoyingly, perched on top a two-step ladder a few feet from the bed.

The form shuffles under the covers. An ARM emerges, reaching in vain for the alarm that is just out of reach.

Fingers extend. A little more and --

RACHEL (early 20s) tumbles out of the bed and onto the plywood floor. Her tangled mess of brunette hair falls all around her, concealing her face.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Rachel brushes her teeth, still in her night clothes -- a pair of basketball shorts (probably from the men's department) and a wife beater top.

She spits into a brand spanking new pedestal sink, rinses her mouth then glances at her reflection. She would be pretty if she wasn't trying so hard not to be.

The rest of the bathroom is in stark contrast to the sink. A big hole on one side of the room most likely used to hold a tub.

On the other, a drain in the floor and a shower head jetting out from the wall serves as a make-shift shower.

The floor is half bare wood and half ceramic tile, obviously unfinished.

On the sterile white walls near the door are six different rectangles of painted color in various hues.

Rachel dries her mouth on a towel, tosses it in the sink and hurries out of the room.
INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A stack of clothes are piled up on the closet floor.

Rachel picks up a pair of paint-covered jeans, then trades it for another pair with less paint on it.

She chooses an over-sized T-shirt that looks like it could belong to her much bigger brother and slides it on right over the wife beater.

After trading her shorts for the jeans, she gathers up her tangled hair into a ponytail, picks up a green apron hanging from the closet door handle and walks out.

EXT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - PARKING LOT - DAY

An elevator DINGS open and out steps Rachel, her green apron draped over one arm, a brown paper bag in one hand and car keys in the other. Heads toward --

A beat up old PICK-UP TRUCK completely covered in rust and held together with duct tape.

Rachel arrives at the truck, inserts a key, unlocks the door. As she pulls it shut, the side mirror falls off.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Rachel enters the main entrance, tying on her green apron.

"Hank's Hardware" is written across the front of the apron in black permanent marker.

She proceeds down the lighting aisle until seeing --

TOBY (late 20s) wearing a matching green apron, stocking boxes of lamps. With his broad chest and muscular physique, he looks more like a quarterback than a hardware employee.

She makes a U-turn and heads back the way she came, almost out of sight when she hears --

TOBY (O.S.)
Rachel, wait up...

She quickens her pace to a near jog, turning down a different aisle.

With Toby hot on her heels, she ducks behind a light bulb display.
Clueless, he turns back around and heads down a neighboring aisle.

LATER

Rachel walks very carefully, peering through the shelves into the next aisle, looking for any sign of Toby.

When the coast looks clear, she heads casually toward a door labeled: "EMPLOYEES ONLY".

Almost there when --

Toby steps out of the employee door. Smiles when he sees her.

    TOBY
    There you are! I've been looking all over for you.

Rachel side steps him and hurries into the women's bathroom.

    RACHEL (O.S.)
    Sorry. Emergency.

    TOBY
    Oh, okay. I'll just wait here.

BATHROOM

Rachel makes a frustrated face, clenches her fists and stomps her feet like a toddler having a tantrum.

OUTSIDE BATHROOM

Toby waits patiently.

    RACHEL (O.S.)
    That's okay. Might be a while. I had bran for breakfast.

He glances at his watch.

    TOBY
    I'm on a fifteen minute break.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Rachel sits in a stall, feet propped up against the door. Using her lap as a desk, she doodles in a black leather book.
She hears someone come in. Sticks her head out the door.

A pretty FEMALE CUSTOMER (30s), about to enter the adjacent stall, stops to stare at her.

   RACHEL
   Was there a guy out there -- six one, short blonde hair, muscles?

   FEMALE CUSTOMER
   No.

   RACHEL
   Are you sure?

   FEMALE CUSTOMER
   I would have remembered someone like that.

   RACHEL
   Thanks.

Rachel shoves the book into her backpack, checks her watch and hurries for the door.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE - OUTSIDE RESTROOMS - DAY

Rachel sticks her head out, covertly checks the hallway in both directions, then dashes for the --

EMPLOYEE ROOM

Once inside, she looks back toward the door, then backs up right into --

Toby who seems awfully glad to see her.

   RACHEL
   Jesus!

   TOBY
   Finally. I thought you fell in.

She ignores him as best she can, walking over to a time clock. She picks up a ticket from a slot labeled: "Rachel Augustus" only to find it already punched.

   TOBY
   I clocked you in. Wouldn't want you getting in any trouble.
RACHEL
You could get fired for that.

TOBY
You gonna tell on me?

She raises an eyebrow, thinking about it. Replaces her time card, picks up a clipboard hanging from a rusted nail.

TOBY
So listen, I was thinking... if you're not doing anything on Friday, maybe we could...

She finds her name on the spreadsheet and scrolls over to the right. Sees the words: "Paint department".

TOBY
... go see a movie...

RACHEL
Son-of-a-bitch!

TOBY
... okay, no movie. What about a basketball game or...

She SLAMS the clipboard back in place, then storms for the door.

Toby follows relentlessly.

TOBY
... just dinner? Some place nice... or casual?

RACHEL
I have to work.

She walks out, letting the door shut in his face.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - APPLIANCE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Surrounded by washers, dryers, stoves and refrigerators, DANIEL (20s), a skinny pimpled-faced guy, uses a pencil to scratch under the cast on his left arm.

An almost orgasmic look comes over his face as he finally reaches the right spot. His head lolls back.

DANIEL
Oh, yeah.
RACHEL (O.S.)
Should I give you some privacy?

Daniel jumps, snapping off half the pencil in his cast. He stares at the other half in his hand.

DANIEL
Uh oh.

RACHEL
I need a favor.

DANIEL
Why should I do you a favor? You haven't even signed my cast yet.

She looks down at the boring white cast devoid of any markings at all.

RACHEL
This isn't high school. Nobody's signed your cast.

DANIEL
Yet.

RACHEL
Fine. Get me a pen.

He hands her a black permanent marker.

She quickly scribbles on his cast.

DANIEL
(reading)
Switch with me or I'm gonna break your other arm?

RACHEL
That was rude. I should've said please.

DANIEL
You spelled break wrong. That's the car kind.

RACHEL
I hope you know how to hold a toothbrush with your toes.

Daniel doesn't look the least bit intimidated.
DANIEL
Lemme guess... paint?

RACHEL
How'd you know?

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Help needed at the paint counter.

He looks accusingly at Rachel.

DANIEL
They're calling you.

RACHEL
No, they're calling you.

DANIEL
I don't want paint. Those people are freaking morons.

RACHEL
But you're so good with morons.

DANIEL
I don't think I can even open the cans with my --

RACHEL
Thank you so much. I owe you. I'll even take your shift on Friday to make it up to you.

DANIEL
But --

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Help needed at the paint counter.

RACHEL
Hurry.

Daniel sighs loudly then walks off.

Rachel smiles, triumphant, and slides into his chair. Puts her feet up on the desk.
INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - PAINT DEPARTMENT - DAY

Daniel walks up to the counter to find an IMPATIENT WOMAN about to hit the help button again.

She stops when he sees Daniel.

    IMPATIENT WOMAN
    Finally. I've been waiting forever.

    DANIEL
    I apologize, ma'am. Can I help you?

The woman hands him a paint chip.

    IMPATIENT WOMAN
    Two gallons semi-gloss.

    DANIEL
    Okay, gimmie ten minutes.

    IMPATIENT WOMAN
    For what?

    DANIEL
    To mix it.

    IMPATIENT WOMAN
    Mix what?

    DANIEL
    The paint.

    IMPATIENT WOMAN
    I'm in a hurry. I'll stir it at home.

    DANIEL
    But I have to mix the color you want.

    IMPATIENT WOMAN
    You don't, like, have it on one of those shelves?

The woman motions toward the shelves of paint behind them.

    DANIEL
    Those are all white.
IMPATIENT WOMAN
What the heck kinda store only carries white paint?

DANIEL
All of them, I'm sure.

IMPATIENT WOMAN
Fine, I'll be back.

Daniel shakes his head in dismay, then grabs two cans of paint and walks back to the counter. He tries to pry one of the lids off with a can opener, but struggles without the use of both hands.

The lid finally comes flying off and the can of paint falls to the floor, spilling everywhere.

DANIEL
Great!

He tries to get around the mess, but slips in the paint and lands hard on his back.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - APPLIANCE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Rachel is in the middle of a phone call, feet still resting comfortably on the desk.

RACHEL
Special order means you have to order it... special... no, you can't have it today... not even if you pay cash...

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Associate Rachel Augustus to the paint counter.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - PAINT DEPARTMENT - DAY

Rachel stands behind the paint counter, across from ANGRY CUSTOMER #1, a teen boy.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #1
I have to prime first?

RACHEL
Either that or paint ten coats.
ANGRY CUSTOMER #1
How much paint would I need for
ten coats?

LATER

ANGRY CUSTOMER #2, an elderly woman holding a hairless chihuahua.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #2
What do you mean you can't color
match my dog? Your sign says you
can match anything!

She points to a sign that reads: "We match any color".

RACHEL
Technically I could, but I'd need
a dime-sized piece of your dog to
put into my scanner.

The woman sucks in an appalled gasp and stomps off.

LATER

ANGRY CUSTOMER #3, bleached blond with dark roots and hands
on her hips.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #3
You're trying to tell me I have to
sand BEFORE I paint?

Rachel stares at her as if she has just taken first place in
a stupid contest.

LATER

ANGRY CUSTOMER #4, 30-something in a business suit.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #4
But I have a business meeting in
half an hour. Couldn't you mix
mine first?

RACHEL
No.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #4
Then could you at least bring it
to me when it's done?

RACHEL
We don't deliver.
LATER

ANGRY CUSTOMER #5, a burly black man, slides Rachel three paint chips of varying shades of pink.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #5
Which do you think is prettier?

Rachel studies the intimidating size of him, then the paint chips. She points to the lightest of the three.

He shakes his head.

She points to the medium toned one.

He shakes his head again.

She picks up the loud, bright one.

RACHEL
How many?

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Rachel gets her paper bag lunch out of her locker and SLAMS the door shut.

Contemplates the seating possibilities. There are 3 large tables. One is taken by Toby and a couple other employees. The other two are empty.

Rachel chooses the empty table farthest from the other employees and sits.

Within seconds, she is surrounded by Toby, JANICE (40s, redhead), STU (40s, beer belly), and FOSTER (30s, prematurely balding).

JANICE
Did you guys hear about Daniel? Pretty embarrassing.

Rachel looks up at the sound of her voice, marveling at how quickly the group converged on her.

STU
Heard it? I damn near felt it.

TOBY
He shouldn't be allowed anywhere near a hardware store. One day he's gonna get himself killed.
FOSTER
Freakin' klutz. That kid could
trip over his own shadow.

RACHEL
That freakin' klutz is a friend of
mine, so if you wanna bad-mouth
him, I suggest going back to your
own table.

Foster holds up his hands as if trying to fend off an
attack.

FOSTER
Whoa, calm down. We were just
shootin' the shit. No need to get
your boxers in a bunch. C'mon,
guys.

Foster gets up from the table, followed by Janice and Stu.
Toby remains seated.

FOSTER
(to Toby)
You comin'?

TOBY
I'll meet you there.

The group wanders out, snickering amongst themselves.

TOBY
Come with us.

Rachel points to her sack lunch, then removes a sandwich and
unwraps it for a bite.

TOBY
My boy Preston will hook you up.
Anything you want.

RACHEL
(mouth full)
I'm eating what I want.

Toby gets up from his seat.

TOBY
Okay. Suit yourself.

He walks off, then pauses in the doorway.
TOBY
About Friday...

RACHEL
No!

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - PAINT DEPARTMENT - DAY

Rachel puts the lid back on a paint can, pounds it into place and slides it onto the counter. Puts a wooden stir stick on top.

A phone RINGS.

She gets a cell out of her pocket. Checks the caller I.D. Sighs loudly. Answers.

RACHEL
How did you get this number?

MARGE (V.O.)
How do you think?

RACHEL
I don't know. That's why I'm asking.

MARGE (V.O.)
Your brother is an FBI agent. Need I say more?

RACHEL
You could say why you're calling. I'm not supposed to be on the phone at work.

MARGE (V.O.)
It's been a long time since you came to a family dinner. The boys would really like it if you showed up tonight.

RACHEL
Just the boys?

MARGE (V.O.)
Well, that includes your dad.

RACHEL
I don't think I can make it tonight. I'm working late.
Only silence over the line.

RACHEL
I'm hanging up now.

MARGE (V.O.)
I suppose I could have Cooper find your address, too.

Rachel performs the same frustrated ritual she did in the bathroom earlier, attracting the attention of nearby customers. Gets back on the phone.

RACHEL
What time?

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Rachel KNOCKS on a door that reads: "MANAGER'S OFFICE". Waits patiently for an acknowledgement.

HANK (O.S.)
What?

She takes a deep breath, then enters.

The office is nothing more than an eight by ten room with a desk and some overflowing file cabinets.

Behind the desk is none other than HANK of Hank's Hardware. He is a tall, husky guy in his 50s with salt and pepper hair.

He works on a giant jigsaw puzzle that spans the entire surface of his desk. The puzzle is mostly done with just a few random pieces and the very center empty.

Rachel stands beside his desk, fidgety.

HANK
What do you want?

RACHEL
Something sort of came up and I was wondering if I could go home a little early.

He finally looks up from his puzzle.

HANK
Tell you what, if you can find this piece...
He thrusts a fat finger into a hole on his puzzle where a piece is missing.

HANK
... you can leave right now.

Rachel glances into the puzzle box lid where the remaining pieces are. Picks one up and hands it to him.

He slides it into place, then taps on it. It fits.

HANK
Well I'll be...

RACHEL
Bye, Hank.

She walks back out the door, shutting it after her.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR - DAY

The car sputters to life as Rachel turns the key in the ignition. She rolls down her window, then throws the car into reverse and backs out of her stall.

She casually looks over her shoulder and sees --

A MAN on a BIKE mere inches from her rear bumper.

She slams on the brakes. Sticks her head out the window.

RACHEL
Are you freaking crazy?

She doesn't get a very good glimpse of the bike rider's face before he pedals awake, waving.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Rachel washes off in her unfinished shower.

LATER

She clears the fog off the mirror and brushes her hair, wrapped in a towel.

LATER

She searches through the clothes on the bottom of her closet. Picks out a pair of jeans and a T-shirt.
As soon as she puts the T-shirt on, she pulls it back off.

Tries a different one. Takes it back off.

Finally settles on a layered tank top. This is the most feminine we've seen her look. She actually has a curvy figure.

INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A giant plasma TV above the roaring fireplace plays a basketball game.

A black leather sectional holds three grown men who are engrossed in the game:

BRIAN (50s) a tall, slim man with silvering hair. Probably popular with the ladies in his prime.

SHAWN (29), medium height and build, shoulder length dark hair tucked back behind his ears, weeks worth of facial hair.

COOPER (33), tall and thin like his dad, with short dark hair and clean-shaven.

All three are dressed casually in jeans and T-shirts.

On screen, a basketball player makes a great rebound, passes the ball cross court and another player takes a long shot and makes it. The timer counts down to zero. Game over.

Brian and Cooper look upset while Shawn leaps to his feet and does a victory dance.

    SHAWN
    I told you. I freakin' told you.
    Benson is the shit! Pay up, bitches!

Shawn puts out two greedy palms.

Brian rolls his eyes, getting his wallet out.

    BRIAN
    Watch your mouth. Marge is right in the kitchen.

Brian places a twenty dollar bill in his hand.

Shawn looks to Cooper who sits with his arms folded across his chest.
I'll getcha later.

Damn right you will.

Cooper catches movement in the driveway through the large bay windows. Gets up and moves to the window to peer out.

Cooper's pov

Rachel's now familiar pick-up truck stops behind a BMW and an SUV.

Who do we know that drives a piece of shit truck?

Shawn pockets his money and sinks back onto the sofa.

(yelling out)
Marge, Rachel's here!

Let her in.

Brian picks up the remote and channel surfs.

Cooper returns to his seat, arms behind his head.

Shawn looks from his dad to his brother, then grumbles under his breath on his way to the door.

EXT. AUGUSTUS HOME - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Rachel climbs the stairs two at a time. Once on the porch, she lifts a hand to knock. Before she can make contact, the door opens.

She peers in, watches Shawn go back to the sofa without even as much as a greeting.

INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rachel walks to the sofa where the men are all engrossed in a wildlife show.

On screen, a group of lions rip into a zebra.

Rachel cringes.
RACHEL

Hi.

The men never take their eyes off the TV.

SHAWN

Hey, Rach.

BRIAN

Rachel, you made it.

COOPER

Watch, watch, watch!

Rachel quickly looks away from the screen.

The men all groan in unison.

BRIAN

That's disgusting.

Cooper snatches the remote away from Brian.

COOPER

Wanna see it again?

Shawn reaches behind him in one deft movement and pulls Rachel onto the sofa. He holds her down while Cooper administers a noogie.

She fights them off until they let her free. Straightens her clothing. Clears her throat.

RACHEL

Marge in the kitchen?

No one responds. They're all engrossed in the instant replay of the animal carnage.

INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

MARGE (early 40s), neatly arranged up-do with full make-up, moves hurriedly around the room, preparing food.

She wears a pretty party dress beneath her pink gemstone and sequint embellished apron.

Rachel walks in, stands awkwardly by the door.

RACHEL

Nice apron.
MARGE
Isn't it wonderful? I made it myself in an arts and crafts class down at the "Sew Fabulous".

Marge glances over her shoulder at Rachel, does a double take at her attire, sloppy hairdo and lack of make-up.

MARGE
Rachel, oh my goodness! Look at you. So...
(clears throat)
... grown up.

Rachel bites the corner of her lip. Looks down at herself, folds her arms across her chest.

RACHEL
Need any help with dinner?

MARGE
I've got it. Why don't you go watch some TV with the boys.

INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The men are still seated at the sofa, watching TV. They chat amongst themselves in the b.g.

Rachel stands before a table with framed pictures scattered haphazardly all over it. She looks over her shoulder at the men, then reaches for a photo way in the back.

INSERT - OLD FAMILY PHOTO

A younger Brian, very handsome, sits with his arm around an equally attractive female (not Marge). In front of them are younger versions of Cooper, Shawn and Rachel.

The boys are dressed neatly in dress shirts and slacks while Rachel wears a pretty dress and has her hair all in curls and ribbons.

BACK TO SCENE

Rachel pushes the remaining pictures to the back and sets the old picture in front.
INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Augustus family are gathered around the dinner table -- Marge and Brian at the heads, Shawn and Rachel one one side and Cooper on the other.

They each have a bowl of soup and a dinner roll in front of them.

Everyone but Rachel seems to be completely at ease with the lack of conversation.

RACHEL
Are we gonna... talk?

BRIAN
About?

RACHEL
You guys invited me. I just thought there would be... questions... or... conversation...

MARGE
We shouldn't talk with our mouths full.

RACHEL
My mouth isn't full.

Marge takes a big bite of her dinner roll.

The silence stretches on as Marge slowly chews her food.

Brian spoons the last of his soup into his mouth. Pushes the empty soup bowl away.

BRIAN
How's dinner coming along?

MARGE
I'll go check.

Marge jumps to her feet and scampers out of the room.

Silence builds up again until --

COOPER
I heard this really funny joke at work the other day.

BRIAN
Let's hear it.
COOPER
Knock knock.

RACHEL
Are you kidding me? They tell knock knock jokes in the FBI?

COOPER
When they're funny.

SHAWN
Who's there?

COOPER
Dishes.

SHAWN
Dishes who?

COOPER
Dishes the FBI, open up.

Brian and Shawn and Rachel all stares at him, not so much as a smirk.

Rachel gets to her feet.

RACHEL
I'm gonna go help Marge.

As if on cue, Marge comes back into the room with three plates. She sets one down in front of Rachel, then Brian and finally Shawn.

Rachel slowly sinks back into her chair.

COOPER
It's always Dad, Shawn, then me.

MARGE
Rachel is our guest. I can't have her --

RACHEL
No, it's okay.

She slides her plate across the table to Cooper.

Cooper grabs his fork and attempts to dig in.

Marge snatches the plate away seconds before Cooper's fork stabs the table.
MARGE
It is NOT okay. Ladies first.

COOPER
Show me a lady.

MARGE
Mind your manners, Cooper. I'll be right back with your food.

Marge quickly exits the room.

Rachel picks up her fork, then investigates the food on her plate.

The presentation is beautiful, but the actual food looks questionable -- an overly blackened piece of fish with a red and orange glaze decorating the plate.

She leans over to whisper to Shawn.

RACHEL
What is it?

SHAWN
She took a cooking class and now she thinks she's Martha freakin' Stewart. If you know what's best for you, you'll just eat it.

She cuts into the fish, finds that the center is practically still swimming. She presses a finger against it.

RACHEL
It's cold.

SHAWN
It goes down faster that way.

RACHEL
But it's raw. Is it safe to eat raw fish?

SHAWN
Hawaiians do it all the time. Pretend you're at a luau.

Marge parades happily back into the kitchen carrying two plates. She sets one down in front of Cooper, who immediately digs in, and another in front of her empty seat.

She stands in front of her designated spot, as if waiting on something.
Brian clears his throat loudly.

    COOPER
    Looks great, Marge.

    SHAWN
    Tastes great, too.

All eyes turn to Rachel.

She gauges their looks.

Shawn motions toward her plate with a slight movement of his head.

Rachel takes the tiniest bite of fish imaginable. Chews. Through clenched teeth --

    RACHEL
    Yum.

    BRIAN
    You already know how I feel about your cooking.

Marge smiles, pleased with herself. Takes her seat and lays a napkin in her lap.

    MARGE
    I know what my boys like.
    (to Rachel)
    You know what they say. The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

She takes a dainty bite of her food. Makes an odd face but keeps chewing.

    MARGE
    Is there a man in your life, Rachel?

Rachel shoves a forkful of food into her mouth. Chews exaggeratedly slow while everyone at the table stops eating to wait for her response.

    COOPER
    What's the matter, Rach? You wanted to talk.
Rachel points to her full mouth, continues chewing. After a beat, she swallows, takes a sip of water and clears her throat.

RACHEL
No.

SHAWN
What about friends with benefits?

Marge shoots him a warning glare.

RACHEL
I don't really have the time --

Marge wipes her mouth with a tiny corner of her linen napkin.

MARGE
You know what they say. All work and no play --

RACHEL
I know that one. I knew the other one, too. Do you have like a book of corny --

Brian, Shawn and Cooper exchange an "S.O.S" look.

BRIAN
So there's no one from work?

RACHEL
I work in a hardware store, dad.

SHAWN
A hardware store?

RACHEL
Yeah. What's wrong with that?

Everyone but Rachel exchanges a look.

RACHEL
What?

MARGE
It's just... interesting.

RACHEL
The same way Stonehenge is interesting or the way Van Gogh was interesting?
COOPER
Van Gogh.

Rachel throws her hands up, frustrated.

SHAWN
Only because it's so weird and random. You can't work around tools and shit --

MARGE
Language.

SHAWN
Tools and stuff. You couldn't even put Legos together when we were kids.

RACHEL
We're not kids anymore.

Cooper licks his soup spoon clean, then balances it on his nose.

Marge slaps him on the back of the head, causing the spoon to fall into his soup with a splash. Soup everywhere.

RACHEL
Well, some of us aren't.

Brian sniffs the air suspiciously while Marge leans over to clean up Cooper's mess.

BRIAN
Is something burning?

Marge bolts out of her seat.

MARGE
Mother --

The smoke detector goes off, BEEPING out the rest of her rant.

Marge races into the kitchen.

Everyone else goes back to eating.

Rachel takes a bite. CRUNCH! Her face scrunches up in pain as her hand bolts up to her jaw.

RACHEL
AAAAAHHHHHHH!
INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rachel sits in the exam chair, hand still to her mouth, looking around the room.

There is a pair of bunny ears on the giant overhead light.

The walls are painted blue with colorful sea creatures.

    RACHEL
    They're all looking at me. Mocking me.
    (to Shawn)
    Could you have found a creepier place?

Cooper and Shawn sit in a corner of the room on little plastic chairs obviously meant for children.

    SHAWN
    Well, I called the whole phone book and this was the only place open twenty four hours for emergencies.

    RACHEL
    But it's... owwww...
    (mumbling)
    ... for kids. How did you even get me in?

    COOPER
    I've got connections.

    RACHEL
    So much for "just eat it". Great advice. Thanks.

    SHAWN
    It could be worse. As we speak, poor dad is eating apple cobbler burnt to a crisp. Try and think of someone other than yourself.

LATER

An older male DENTIST works on Rachel's tooth while she reclines back in the exam table.

Shawn looks at a magazine.

Cooper plays with a shape sorter toy.
DENTIST
How'd you crack your tooth?
Rachel attempts a reply that no one can make out.
Shawn glances up from the magazine.

SHAWN
She was opening beer bottles with her teeth.
Rachel protests loudly but still unintelligible.

SHAWN
We warned her this would happen, but she's pretty headstrong.
Again she mumbles something that cannot be deciphered.

DENTIST
Well, luckily it's not that bad.
I'll have you fixed up in a jiffy.
A RINGING comes from Rachel's pocket. She reaches in for her cell phone.
Shawn tries to snatch it away but she holds on tight.
They wrestle for it.
Shawn wins. Checks the caller I.D.

SHAWN
Oooh, who's Hank? What's his full name? Hank E. Panky?
Rachel reaches for the phone in vain, mumbling something that sounds like "Give it!".

DENTIST
If you don't stay still, I'm gonna have to give you the gas.
Cooper throws down the toy, suddenly interested in the conversation.

COOPER
I'll give you an extra twenty if you gas her.
Shawn answers the call.
SHAWN
You've reached Rachel's phone...
no, she can't right now... she's
got something in her mouth...

Cooper high-fives Shawn.

Rachel continues to try to get the phone from him while
remaining as still as possible.

SHAWN
Can I give her a message?... uh
huh... uh huh... double shift?...
shouldn't be a problem...

RACHEL
(muffled)
No!

SHAWN
No, I'm not her boyfriend... just
some random guy she picked up at a
strip club...

RACHEL
(muffled)
Hang up.

SHAWN
Wait, hold on.

He moves the phone away but neglects to cover the receiver.

SHAWN
(to Rachel)
What'd you say?

RACHEL
(muffled)
Hang up!

SHAWN
(on phone)
I think she said handcuffs.

RACHEL
(muffled)

SHAWN
(on phone)
Hang tough?
Rachel pulls the suction tube out of her mouth.

RACHEL
Hang up.

SHAWN
(on phone)
She said to hang up.

RACHEL
(whispering)
You hang up... on him.

SHAWN
She wants me to hang up on you. It was nice chatting.

Shawn hits a button, ending the call. Looks up to meet Rachel's murderous glare.

SHAWN
What?

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - KEY COUNTER - DAY

A loud GRINDING sound can be heard as Rachel works the key machine.

A KEY CUSTOMER waits patiently.

Rachel removes the key from the machine and slips it into a bag. Hands it to the customer.

KEY CUSTOMER
What if it doesn't fit?

RACHEL
It'll fit.

KEY CUSTOMER
But what if it doesn't?

RACHEL
Keep your receipt and you can bring it back.

Key customer nods and walks away.

Rachel glances across the aisle at the --

POWER TOOL SECTION
where Toby stands with a POWER TOOL CUSTOMER, showing him a drill.

She glances at her watch. 11:58.

She turns back to her counter and clears some of the clutter.

Glances back at her watch. 11:59.

A quick look back at Toby reveals him looking her way.

She turns back around and straightens some decorative keys on a small counter top display.

Looks back at her watch. Watches the second hand travel the rest of the way around. It hits twelve and she dashes off.

POWER TOOL SECTION

Toby sees her leave.

TOBY
So you should be good to go.

He hands his customer the drill and tries to hurry away.

POWER TOOL CUSTOMER
Wait, so you're sure this is the right bit.

Toby watches Rachel disappear from sight. Disappointed, he turns back to his customer.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Rachel stares into her empty locker, confused. She scratches her head, then SLAMS the door closed to find --

Toby standing right beside her.

She gives a slight start.

RACHEL
You gotta stop doing that.

TOBY
Where's your lunch?

RACHEL
I'm not really hungry. Just gonna get a drink or something.
She walks over to a vending machine and fishes in her pocket for some change.

    TOBY
    You forgot it, didn't you? I've never seen you forget your lunch the entire time you've been working here.

    RACHEL
    I was in a hurry this morning.

    TOBY
    Well, the diner --

    RACHEL
    I'm fine.

She drops some change and selects a soda. Waits while it noisily dispenses.

Toby retrieves the can, hands it to her.

EXT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Rachel smokes a cigarette and sips her soda. She glances at the diner across the street. Contemplates.

INT. DINER - DAY

Toby, Janice, Stu and Foster sit at a booth near the window. Stu nudges Toby, then nods toward the window.

TOBY'S POV

Rachel heads for the diner entrance.

    JANICE
    Did you guys hear Debbie from garden is knocked up?

    FOSTER
    Big deal. She's married.

    JANICE
    Her husband's in the Army... in Iraq.

    FOSTER
    Oh, shit!
The door opens and Rachel tries to sneak in, but a bell above the door CHIMES, drawing the attention of everyone in the room.

Cheeks flushed, Rachel glances quickly at Toby's table, then hurries across the room, as far from them as possible.

TOBY
Rachel.

He flags her over but she waves him off and continues to her own table. As soon as she's seated, she pulls out her leather book from her backpack and starts doodling.

INSERT - BOOK
A detailed pencil sketch of a living room, complete with tiled fireplace surround, sofa, window treatments and built-in bookshelves.

Looks like something a designer would have drawn.

BACK TO SCENE

PRESTON (O.S.)
That's really nice.

Rachel snaps her book closed, then glances up to find --

PRESTON (mid 20s), tall and handsome with messy brown hair and intense greenish-blue eyes. More than a week's worth of facial hair completes his "just rolled out of bed" look.

He speaks with a pronounced British accent --

PRESTON
From what I saw of it. Mind if I take another peek?

He holds an order tablet in one hand and a pencil in the other, which he uses to try to flip open the cover of her book.

Rachel folds her hands on top of it, protectively.

RACHEL
Why don't you just take my order.

PRESTON
Okay, then. Can I take your order?
RACHEL
Can I see a menu?

Preston smiles with just the corner of his mouth and slides into the booth across of her. Runs his fingers through his hair.

PRESTON
What do you like?

RACHEL
Menus. Preferably with pictures. I'm a visual person.

PRESTON
That's not really the way we work here. I can make anything. I like to keep my customers happy.

RACHEL
You're the cook, too?

PRESTON
Sometimes.

He fidgets with his hair again.

RACHEL
You sure touch your hair a lot for someone that handles food.

PRESTON
I wash them a lot, too.
(beat)
Let me ask you a question. Do you owe that bloke over there money?

She subtly glances over her shoulder to see Toby staring at them. Quickly looks away.

RACHEL
We work together.

PRESTON
I thought he worked at the hardware store.

RACHEL
He does. We do.
Preston laughs loudly.

Rachel nervously checks on Toby to find him looking with more interest.

RACHEL
Would you stop laughing like that. He's gonna think I'm joking with you or something.

PRESTON
Well, aren't you?

RACHEL
No.

Preston wipes the smile off his face and clears his throat.

PRESTON
Okay, then, lets get back to business. What do you feel like eating?

RACHEL
No. Not until you tell me what is so damn funny about me working in a hardware store.

PRESTON
Nothing. I was just... enjoying the irony.

RACHEL
Irony?

PRESTON
Yeah, it means --

RACHEL
I know what it means. But I fail to see the irony of this particular situation.

PRESTON
Well, I'm like a waitress and you're a... (American accent, macho) ... hardware dude.

He laughs again and again Rachel responds by gauging Toby's reaction.
Toby looks like he's about to leap out of his seat and challenge Preston to a duel.

PRESTON
Why do you keep looking at him? Are you two... ?

RACHEL
No!

PRESTON
You're very... interesting...

RACHEL
Where I come from interesting isn't always a compliment.

PRESTON
Where are you from?

RACHEL
Here. I meant where I grew up. My family.

PRESTON
Well, where I'm from interesting isn't an insult.

RACHEL
And where's that?

He extends a hand across the table.

PRESTON
Hi, I'm Preston. I'm from Neptune.

RACHEL
Is that in the U.K.?

She shakes his hand.

He chuckles, trying to figure out if she's joking.

TOBY (O.S.)
Preston, can we get more soda over here?

Without looking away from Rachel --

PRESTON
In a minute.
Toby looks pissed as he whispers conspiratorially with his co-workers.

PRESTON
Actually, it's in the solar system.

RACHEL
Right. Like the planet. Okay, well, what're you doing so far from home?

PRESTON
I like to travel.

RACHEL
Obviously.

PRESTON (O.S.)
Preston... we're dying of thirst, man.

Preston gets to his feet.

PRESTON
I'll be right back. Think about what you want.

Preston walks over to Toby's table and collects all four empty glasses with one hand. Gives Toby a look, then walks away.

STU
Dude's makin' a play for your girl.

FOSTER
I don't get your fascination with her anyway. Is it even confirmed that she's female?

Toby smacks Foster on the back of his head.

FOSTER
What? I mean, look at her. Does she even have jugs?

Janice, Toby and Stu stare at him.

FOSTER
That's what they call 'em, right?
Foster makes a gesture that looks like he's cupping a pair of over-sized breasts.

LATER

Rachel is drawing in her sketch book again.

A plate of food slides in front of her.

She looks up to find the confident smile of Preston beaming down on her.

    RACHEL
    I didn't order yet.

    PRESTON
    Try it.

She looks at the sandwich, then up at Preston.

He wiggles his eyebrows at her.

She closes her book, places it on the booth next to her. Takes a bite of her sandwich.

He waits patiently while she chews and swallows.

    RACHEL
    It's good.

    PRESTON
    Just good?

She takes another bite, chuckles.

    RACHEL
    (mouth full)
    Really good.

Toby and his gang stand up, head for the register.

    TOBY
    You better get that to go, Rach. We gotta be back in five minutes.

Rachel ignores his warning and keeps eating, savoring each bite.

Preston meets them at the register, collects money from each of them. Quickly makes change and hands it back to each of them.
Janice, Stu and Forester walk out, causing the bell above the door to JINGLE.

PRESTON
I'll make sure she gets back in time.

Toby flashes him one last hard look, then heads for the door.

PRESTON
What, no tip?

TOBY
I got a tip for ya. Don't waste your time on that one. Pretty sure she's batting for the other team.

PRESTON
I'd rather have the money.

Toby scoffs on his way out the door.

Preston closes the register and returns to the dining room, checking on a table with an elderly couple.

PRESTON
How's everything over here?

RACHEL'S TABLE

Rachel eats her sandwich, occasionally glancing over in Preston's direction.

Preston continues checking on the other PATRONS, pretending as if he doesn't see her looking.

Eventually makes his way back to Rachel. Stands beside her table, glances at his watch.

PRESTON
I promised that guy that you're not with that I would get you out of here in time. You've got about thirty seconds.

RACHEL
Shit.

She grabs her backpack, leaps out of the booth and sprints for the door. Stops just short of leaving, turns back.
RACHEL
How much do I -- ?

PRESTON
Just go.

RACHEL
Thanks.

And she's gone.

Preston smiles to himself, then clears her table. Looks down into the booth seat to find --

RACHEL'S BOOK
He picks it up for a closer look.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT
Rachel lazily mops the floor, dead on her feet. She stops for a second to rest her head against the mop. Eyes close and then --

P.A. ANNOUNCER
Associate Rachel Augustus to the manager's office.

She springs back to life, walking away with the mop and bucket in tow.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT
Hank sits in the same place we saw him last, behind his desk working on a new jigsaw puzzle.

A KNOCK is heard on his door.

HANK
Come in.

Rachel enters, stands awkwardly in the doorway.

RACHEL
You wanted to see me?

He doesn't look away from his puzzle.

HANK
Shut the door.
She sighs, enters the rest of the way, shuts the door.

RACHEL
Listen, Hank, about last night --

HANK
Those special order tiles you wanted came in.

RACHEL
Oh. Okay.

HANK
I had one o' the guys load it into the back of your truck.

RACHEL
Thanks... but I can't --

HANK
Don't worry about it. I'll say they dropped or something.

Rachel stares at him, dumbfounded.

Hank still hasn't established eye contact.

RACHEL
Hank, I... are you...

HANK
Don't get all sappy. It's just a couple tiles. Now get outta here. I'm trying to concentrate.

RACHEL
Okay. Thanks.

Rachel heads back out.

Hank finally looks up.

HANK
And Rachel... make sure you leave these on for a little while before you tear it all off.

EXT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Rachel comes to a stop beside her truck to find --

Toby loads the last case of tile into the back.
She looks in to see ten boxes.

    RACHEL
    Thanks... for loading it up.

    TOBY
    Sure.

He pushes the now empty cart into an empty parking stall. Lights a cigarette, then offers one to Rachel.

She hesitates a second, then accepts.

He lights it for her.

They both exhales puffs of smoke into the night sky.

    TOBY
    So you and Preston...

    RACHEL
    No.

She steals a quick peak at the diner.

With no lights on, it appears to be closed.

    TOBY
    He always closes early on Thursday.

    RACHEL
    So you and Preston...

    TOBY
    No. God no.

    RACHEL
    I just meant... are you friends?

    TOBY
    Oh.

Toby chuckles, relieved. Takes a drag off his cigarette.

    TOBY
    No. Not really.

A long silence filled with nothing but Toby and Rachel inhaling and exhaling on their cigarettes.
TOBY
You don't work on Saturday night, do you?

Rachel drops her cigarette and stomps it out. Heads for her truck.

RACHEL
Night, Toby.

She gets into her truck while Toby finishes his cigarette, watching her.

TOBY
Night, Rachel.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Rachel steps out of the ELEVATOR holding two cases of tile. By the looks of it, they're heavy.

She stops dead in her tracks when she sees —

Preston stands outside her apartment door, holding what looks like her leather book.

She stares at him a second before approaching.

PRESTON
Are those heavy? They look heavy.

She sets the boxes down. He moves his feet just in time to keep them from getting crushed.

RACHEL
What're you doing here? And if you say you were just in the neighborhood, I'm gonna knee you in the nuts and start screaming.

PRESTON
Just out of curiosity, what will you do if I say I was stalking you?

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Like the other rooms of Rachel's apartment, the kitchen is in the middle of a major remodel. Only half the cabinets are hung. The rest sit on the floor still in their packaging.
Big spaces where the appliances are supposed to be. A coffee maker and microwave sit on a little metal cart on wheels.

Rachel pours two cups of coffee, delivers one to Preston who sits at a stool next to a cafe table.

PRESTON
Where are you sitting?

RACHEL
I'll stand.

PRESTON
In case you need to make a run for it?

RACHEL
Start talking.

He takes a sip of his coffee.

PRESTON
I found your book and I saw your address in the front and I figured I would mail it to you, but this little voice in my head reminded me that things get lost in the mail all the time, so --

RACHEL
You hear voices? They make medication for that.

PRESTON
Do you want to hear this?

Rachel sips her coffee.

RACHEL
Go on.

PRESTON
So I remembered you saying how important it was to you so I felt like --

RACHEL
I never said that.
PRESTON
Maybe it was the way you clutched it to your bosom like a newborn baby. In any case, I felt it was my responsibility to make sure you got it back.

RACHEL
That's really weird.

She goes into a cabinet and gets out a package of chips. Offers some to Preston who declines.

PRESTON
What would be less weird?

RACHEL
Uh, I dunno. You're thinking of renting an apartment in this building... your car ran out of gas... your favorite aunt lives --

PRESTON
What if I said I wanted to see you again?

He kiddingly shields himself from an impending attack.

RACHEL
You know where I work.

PRESTON
I couldn't go to your work. That's something a stalker would do.

She lets a small chuckle slip out, then regains her composure.

RACHEL
Why are you putting the full court press on when you don't even know me?

PRESTON
Full court press? That's like a basketball term, isn't it?

RACHEL
Very good. There may be a little testosterone in you afterall.

He looks around, investigating the kitchen's disarray.
PRESTON
When did you move in?

RACHEL
Three... no... three and a half years ago.

PRESTON
First thing in the morning I want you to fire your carpenter.

RACHEL
I'm doing the work myself.

PRESTON
Oh right. I forgot. Hardware dude. Is anything finished?

RACHEL
The bathroom was... for about a month. Then I realized I hated the tile I picked, so I tore it all... well, most of it out.

He watches Rachel devouring her chips.

PRESTON
How do you cook in here?

She holds up the chips as evidence.

PRESTON
Let me buy you dinner.

RACHEL
No.

PRESTON
Any particular reason?

RACHEL
You're a stranger, albeit an interesting stranger.

PRESTON
I'll assume you meant the "good" interesting.

RACHEL
If you want to.
PRESTON
You won't have dinner with me but you let me into your flat.

RACHEL
Good point. That was dangerous.

She walks out of the room.

Preston finishes his coffee, then follows.

Rachel stands beside the open front door.

PRESTON
You know my name and what I do for a living. That should at the very least upgrade me to "interesting person I sort of know casually that made me laugh six times in twenty minutes".

RACHEL
I laugh when I'm uncomfortable.

PRESTON
What do you do when you're amused?

RACHEL
I'll let you know if it ever happens.

He walks out the door. Stops in the hallway.

PRESTON
One could argue that you left your book in my diner on purpose, knowing I would bring it back.

RACHEL
Then "one" would be full of shit.

PRESTON
Good night, Rachel.

She watches him until he's in the elevator and the doors close. An uncharacteristic smile forms on her face.

INT. RACHEL'S HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Rachel takes a sledgehammer to the remaining tile, breaking it up into little pieces.
She tosses the pieces into a big black trash can.

LATER

Rachel uses a notched trowel to spread out a thick coat of adhesive.

She places down her new tile squares, placing spacers between them.

LATER

Rachel lays the last tile in her second row, then steps away to look at it.

She stares long and hard, then leaves the room.

A second later she walks back in and stares again.

Shaking her head, she walks back out.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - EMPLOYEE ROOM - DAY

Rachel holds the fated clipboard, staring in horror.

She gets her cell phone out and dials furiously.

RACHEL
I don't care what you're doing. You have to drop it and get to work.

INTERCUT - EMPLOYEE ROOM / DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM

Daniel lays on the sofa, wearing the same cast on his left arm and a cumbersome back brace. He shifts uncomfortably.

DANIEL
What's wrong?

RACHEL
Don't "what's wrong" me! How dare you stiff me with your painting class! I hate paint. I hate painting.

DANIEL
Stiff you? I don't recall you giving me much of a choice. I need my right arm.

A big furry dog prances into the room and licks his toes.
DANIEL
Bonnie, knock it off.

RACHEL
What'd you call me?

DANIEL
No, I was talking to the dog.

He tries moving his feet but the dog isn't discouraged.

DANIEL
Screw the dog, Daniel and get your ass down here.

DANIEL
First of all, I will not screw my dog. I'm not that desperate. And secondly, you need that class as much as that class needs you. You should work through your... paint issues.

RACHEL
I do NOT have paint issues.

DANIEL
What color is every room in your apartment?

Rachel rolls her eyes.

RACHEL
White.

PRESTON
Uh huh. And what do you have smeared over every wall in your apartment?

RACHEL
Paint samples.

PRESTON
Your honor, I rest my case.

RACHEL
What if they ask about color choices and coordinating and --

DANIEL
They won't. Just stick to technique and you'll be fine.
As the dog continues to lick his toes, Daniel sits up to scare it off and ends up falling off the couch with a THUMP. He grabs his right arm with his casted arm, moaning.

INT. DINER - KITCHEN - DAY

Preston moves around the kitchen like a seasoned pro, stirring, seasoning and tasting.

He spoons some pasta sauce over a plate of noodles, garnishes with some chopped parsley. Places the pasta dish on a tray with three other meals.

He walks into the --

DINING ROOM

and delivers the food to a table of three YOUNG WOMEN.

    PRESTON
    Here you go, ladies.

He places a dish in front of each woman.

The women smile appreciatively.

    PRESTON
    Enjoy.

He quickly walks off and back into the --

KITCHEN

He stops beside the COOK, a short Italian with a shiny bald head.

    PRESTON
    Think you can handle it for a while?

    COOK
    Yeah. Where you goin'?

Preston picks up a take-out box on the counter and heads out.

    PRESTON
    Delivery.
COOK

Okay.
(beat)
We deliver?

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - CLASS AREA - DAY

Three rows of ten chairs are half occupied by curious-eyed women. They stare intently at --

Rachel who stands before them, holding up a roll of blue painter's tape.

RACHEL
Now you're going to tape off anything you don't want to get paint on, like trims, doorknobs, molding and --

One of the women in the "audience", PAINT GIRL #1, raises her hand.

RACHEL
Yes?

PAINT GIRL #1
Do you have to use that blue tape? I have some duct tape at home.

RACHEL
No, you can't use duct tape.

PAINT GIRL #1
Why not?

RACHEL
It'll leave a sticky residue behind. Blue painters tape is non-tacky.

PAINT GIRL #1
If the blue tape isn't sticky, how does it stick to the stuff you're taping?

RACHEL
It's just... it'll stick. You'll have to take my word for it.

Not satisfied with the answer, Paint Girl #1 sinks back into her seat, arms folded across her chest.
Now I'll demonstrate how to tape off your molding.

Rachel turns to a faux wall with a square cut out and framed with white molding. She carefully tapes up the molding, then turns to find --

Preston sitting amongst the women in the audience, take-out box of food resting on his lap.

She momentarily loses her train of thought.

And then... next you... we'll need some sand paper...

A different woman in the crowd, PAINT GIRL #2, speaks out.

We went over sanding already.

You mean I missed sanding? I love that part. Would you mind demonstrating again?

Flustered, Rachel trades the roll of blue tape for a paint brush. Dips the brush into an open gallon of denim blue paint, then paints around the taped off area.

This is called cutting in. Don't go too far, just get what you won't be able to with a roller.

PRESTON (O.S.)
Why can't you get it with a roller?

Rachel sighs, then turns around. Puts her paint brush down and picks up a roller.

It's just easier to get the edges with a brush and the rest with a roller.

But why? I mean technically.
Because of the shape of the roller... it's... rounded... and your walls are flat... and...

She rolls her roller in a tray of paint, then goes back to the wall. Rolls on the color using long, even strokes.

Then there's just the matter of rolling.

In a matter of seconds, Rachel has painted the whole wall. She puts down the roller and turns to her class, hands on hips.

And that's it. Thanks for coming.

Wait, I have a question. So, how do you know how to pick the right color?

Rachel frowns, looking as though she's cursing Daniel in her head.

It's really just a personal choice. Any more questions?

Paint Girl #1 eagerly raises her hand, like a five year old at her first day of kindergarten.

Yes?

So my kitchen and dining rooms are sorta connected. My dining room is a chocolate brown. What color do you think I should paint my kitchen?

Well...

Rachel thinks it over. Looks around for inspiration. Checks her watch.

PAINT GIRL #1
Oh, I love zen. Thank you so much.

RACHEL
Great. So if there's no more questions...

Rachel gathers up her supplies. About to walk off when --

PRESTON
I've got a question.

She turns to him, lips pursed, not very happy with him.

RACHEL
Anyone else?

Preston walks over to her, pauses dramatically, then gets down on one knee.

The women of the painting class GASP in unison.

Rachel's eyes expand in shock.

Preston opens the take-out box and holds it up to her.

PRESTON
Will you have lunch with me?

Rachel looks around at the pleasantly surprised faces of the painting group. Looks back at Preston to see his now signature corner-of-his-mouth smirk.

INT. HANK'S HARDWARE STORE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Rachel and Preston sit at an otherwise empty table, sharing a take-out container of food.

PRESTON
Now I know why your apartment walls are naked. You're color blind.

RACHEL
I'm not color blind.

PRESTON
Color phobic, then.
RACHEL
I'm not afraid of color. I like color. I embrace color.

PRESTON
Then what's the problem?

Rachel puts down her fork and takes a drink of her bottled water.

RACHEL
Who's running your diner if you're over here?

PRESTON
A more than capable person. Don't change the subject.

RACHEL
How did you know how to answer that lady's question?

PRESTON
I have eyes. I know what looks good together. And I'm not color blind.

RACHEL
Neither am I.

PRESTON
Okay, I'll tell you my secret.

He leans in like he's about to give away the colonel's secret recipe.

PRESTON
I have three sisters. You hang out with women long enough, you learn a few things.

He sits back upright. The secret is over.

PRESTON
Except for you. I'm quite certain I couldn't learn a thing from you.

RACHEL
That sounded a whole lot like an insult.
PRESTON
Or a challenge. Do with it what you will.

RACHEL
What do your sisters do?

PRESTON
You're doing it again.

RACHEL
Am I?

She picks up her fork and continues to eat.

PRESTON
Where's your boyfriend?

RACHEL
He's off today.

PRESTON
So you admit he's your boyfriend?

RACHEL
No. He's not.

PRESTON
What does "batting for the other team" mean?

RACHEL
Why? Where'd you hear that?

PRESTON
He said it about you.

She chokes on her food, COUGHING and SPUTTERING.

PRESTON
We don't have baseball back home, but I'm guessing it's some derivative of not interested.

As Rachel continues to choke, Preston taps her on the back a couple times.

RACHEL
He was calling me a lesbian...
which I can assure you, I'm not.

PRESTON
That's a relief.
She stops eating to stare at him, eyebrows raised.

PRESTON
I was afraid it meant you played baseball. I despise women that are into sports.

She remains serious until he smiles that crooked smile of his. Then she eases up.

Preston jumps to his feet.

PRESTON
Well, enjoy. I have to get back to work.

She waits until he is almost out the door before --

RACHEL
Wait. So your challenge... not only am I quite certain there are a great number of things I could teach you... but I bet there isn't a single thing you can do better than me...

PRESTON
You're on.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rachel and Preston stand side by side just beyond the bathroom door.

He looks over the room in depth like he's fixing to give an appraisal.

PRESTON
This is probably the saddest thing I've ever seen. No wait, that would be your kitchen. This is the second.

RACHEL
You should see my bedroom.

PRESTON
Is that an invitation?

Rachel blushes uncontrollably.
RACHEL
I didn't... that's not what I...

Preston laughs at her obvious blunder and resulting embarrassment.

PRESTON
I have one question for you.

RACHEL
Uh oh.

PRESTON
Do you whizz in your sink or shower?

RACHEL
You don't wanna know.

PRESTON
Remind me not to use either.

LATER

Rachel and Preston are down on their knees in the center of the room, back to back. Both have a bucket of tile adhesive, a trowel and a stack of tiles.

RACHEL
Okay, so you work toward that wall, I'll work toward this one and we'll see who finishes first.

PRESTON
One question.

RACHEL
Okay?

He holds up the trowel.

PRESTON
What do I do with this?

RACHEL
You've never layed tile before?

PRESTON
Nope.

RACHEL
Never?
PRESTON
Never ever. And if you say "never ever ever" I'm going to dump this bucket over your head.

RACHEL
Okay, what can you do?

PRESTON
I changed a couple light bulbs once.

RACHEL
Great, then you're useless because I don't even have light fixtures.

PRESTON
If you can do it, I know I can. How hard could it be?

LATER
One half of the bathroom is tiled perfectly, the other is a huge mess. Tiles are left crooked and no spaces are left for the grout.

RACHEL
You realize you've just set me back a whole day.

PRESTON
Don't I at least get points for finishing first?

She kneels down to closely examine his un-handiwork. It's an even bigger disaster up close.

RACHEL
Why didn't you use the spacers?

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of white plastic spacers.

PRESTON
I thought they were decorative.

SERIES OF SHOTS: REMODELING DUEL

A) Preston and Rachel stand across the room from each other, nail guns in hand like cowboys in a duel. They turn suddenly and get to work.

B) Rachel's share of the molding and trim is perfectly neat
and straight. Preston's is crooked and has way too many nails in it.

C) They are in the kitchen now putting up cabinets. This time Preston cheats by peeking at Rachel's work and trying to replicate it.

D) Once again, Rachel's cabinets are flush and level while Preston's are noticeably lopsided. Rachel places a canned good in the cabinet and watches, amused, as it rolls across. Preston stands the can upright and makes a "ta-da" gesture like he's solved the dilemma.

E) Their next task is in the living room tiling the fireplace surround. They are using sheets of one by one glass tiles. Rachel works on the right while Preston tackles the left.

F) Preston starts at the top instead of the bottom. He slaps on a sheet of tiles and reaches for a second. When he turns back around, the first sheet has slid out of place.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Preston and Rachel step back to take a look at their fireplace work. As previous projects, half of it looks professional and the other half like a child did it.

    RACHEL
    We never discussed my prize.

    PRESTON
    This whole thing was a set-up. You cheated.

    RACHEL
    By whose rules?

    PRESTON
    I think I know something I'm better at than you. Want to take a break?

    RACHEL
    Bring it.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

And ultra modern lounge with a circular bar in the heart of it surrounded by big leather sofas. Walls are covered with over-sized geometric patterns. Very visually stimulating.
Preston and Rachel squeeze their way through dancing couples on the crowded dance floor. They are separated a few times before he takes her by the hand and leads her to --

A stage area surrounded by tables and chairs.

Loud TECHNO MUSIC plays in the background.

RACHEL
(over music)
If this is a drinking contest, I hope you've got good medical coverage.

Instead of shouting, Preston simply lowers his lips to Rachel's ear --

PRESTON
Patience is a virtue.

He pulls out a chair for her and she sits. He remains standing.

RACHEL
You're not sitting?

PRESTON
Order me a Heineken. I'll be right back.

RACHEL
Oh, I get it. You're trying to inebriate me to impair my skills. That's cheating.

PRESTON
By whose rules?

With a cunning smirk, he walks off.

Rachel watches him for a second, but soon loses sight of him in the haze of dancing lights.

She sits uncomfortably, looking around at the sharply dressed men and women then at her own under-dressed attire, suddenly self conscious.

A pretty young WAITRESS in a mini skirt and halter top stops beside her table.

WAITRESS
What can I getcha?
Rachel is distracted as the loud MUSIC ends and the lights are dimmed.

RACHEL
Two Heinekens... and a shot of Tequila.

WAITRESS
Be right back.

The waitress walks off, giving Rachel an unobstructed view of the stage.

Masked in shadows, a tall male walks out on stage carrying an acoustic guitar. He gets comfortable on a stool, then adjusts the mic and positions the guitar.

It doesn't take Rachel long to figure out that it's Preston.

She looks around, realizing the stage area is now crowded with people, leaving the rest of the lounge all but dead.

A long guitar intro is followed by beautiful lyrics and a subdued yet smooth voice.

Like everyone else, Rachel is mesmerized.

RACHEL
(under her breath)
Shit.

WAITRESS
Here ya go.

She sets down the drinks on coasters.

Rachel reaches into her backpack/purse.

WAITRESS
You're with Preston, right?

Rachel nods.

WAITRESS
It's on the house.

She walks off before Rachel can reply.

Rachel turns her attention back to Preston's performance. Drinks her shot. Chases it with the beer, all with her eyes glued on him.

The song's lyrics are absolutely amazing as is Preston's
voice. Rachel has officially been dealt an ass whooping.

Song comes to an end.

Crowd CHEERS. Rachel WHISTLES.

A low spotlight appears on Preston. He speaks into the crowd, directly at Rachel.

PRESTON
(into the mic)
Your turn.

All eyes fall on Rachel.

She looks around, feeling the pressure.

RACHEL
You win.

PRESTON
Without a fight? That's not like you.

RACHEL
I don't sing.

PRESTON
How do you know unless you try?

The place is suddenly so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

Rachel is very much aware of the entire room waiting on her response. Starting to get angry --

RACHEL
What is this? Because I'm better at six hundred things than you, you have to go and rub the one thing you're better at in my face?

Preston chuckles, taking her sudden attitude change in stride.

PRESTON
I'll make it easy. You can even use the house band.

He motions behind stage and a group of MUSICIANS take their places, instruments in hand.

Rachel shakes her head.
PRESTON
What're you afraid of?

RACHEL
I'm not afraid.

PRESTON
Tell you what, here's how we're gonna settle this. You can either come up here and sing or... kiss me.

For the first time since being put on the spot, Rachel smiles.

She picks up Preston's beer and empties it, all eyes on her. She walks up to the stage, accepts his help up. Clears her throat.

Preston waits expectantly, so sure she is choosing the latter option.

Rachel licks her lips, bites the corner of her mouth. Takes Preston by his shirt and pulls him closer. Closer still. Moves her lips to his... about to kiss him --

She aborts at the last second, taking the mic out of his hands.

The crowd comes alive, enjoying the "performance".

Rachel walks over to the house band and whispers something. Returns to Preston's side.

He jumps off the stage and takes a seat in Rachel's chair.

The music starts and Rachel sings. Low and behold, she has a decent singing voice. No where near as good as Preston, but still impressive nonetheless.

Preston chuckles to himself.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Rachel drives, focused on the road.

Preston sits beside her, staring, still in awe.

She finally notices, glances over at him.

RACHEL
What?
PRESTON
I should've known. Is there anything you're NOT good at?

RACHEL
You'd probably kick my ass at waitressing.

PRESTON
How dignified. I'm more coordinated than a girl.

RACHEL
Hey, don't go getting all low self esteem on me. This was your idea, remember.

PRESTON
You make it very hard to be a man around you.

Rachel suddenly seems frustrated by something outside the windshield.

RACHEL
What the hell is this guy doing?

PRESTON
Who?

She motions out the window. He looks.

PRESTON'S POV
An older model sedan in the right lane has his blinker on while bopping his head to music.

RACHEL
The idiot that's been driving with his blinker on for the last five miles.

PRESTON
Maybe he wants in.

RACHEL
Roll down your window.

PRESTON
Why?

RACHEL
Roll down your window.
Rachel suddenly blares her HORN, startling both Preston and the other driver.

**RACHEL**
(yelling)
Turn your blinker off!

Preston sticks a finger in his ear, trying to flush out her yell.

**PRESTON**
I think you might be the poster child for road rage.

**RACHEL**
You're kidding me. That doesn't bother you?

**PRESTON**
Not at all.

**RACHEL**
He's too busy singing along to his... Neil Diamond eight track to realize that his blinker is on. Meanwhile people around him, namely me, can't figure out if he wants in or not.

**PRESTON**
Do they really have cars that play eight tracks?

She flashes him a look that says "oh nevermind".

Her cell phone RINGS.

**RACHEL**
Take the wheel.

**PRESTON**
Where are you going?

**RACHEL**
What?

**PRESTON**
I want some assurance that you're not going to leap across to his car and turn off his blinker.
RACHEL
Just grab the wheel, smart ass.

Preston takes hold of the steering wheel while Rachel fishes into her jeans pocket for the phone.

A quick peek at the caller I.D. and she tosses the phone onto the dashboard. Takes back the wheel.

The phone continues to RING.

PRESTON
That bad, huh?

RACHEL
Can you put a restraining order on a co-worker?

PRESTON
Do you mind if I...?

He motions toward the phone.

RACHEL
Consider yourself warned.

Preston picks up the phone, answers.

PRESTON
Hello... no, she isn't... can I take a message... yes, I'm sure... no, I will NOT tell you what she's doing...

He puts his hand over the receiver, turns to Rachel.

PRESTON
Persistent little wanker, isn't he?

Rachel nods and mouths the word: "stalker".

Preston gets back to the call.

PRESTON
I'll pass on the message, but I can tell you right now she's busy tomorrow.

He looks over at Rachel while replying --

PRESTON
She's going out with me.
She is unresponsive for a moment, then glances at him with a smile.

PRESTON
Thanks for calling, Toby. I'll let her know... I'll tell her that, too... best to keep that one to yourself... okay, bye now.

He hangs up with a sly smile on his face. Tosses the phone back on the dashboard.

RACHEL
You shouldn't have lied to him. He's probably text messaging the entire store that I'm sleeping with you.

PRESTON
The horror.

RACHEL
I wasn't... why do you always... I didn't mean it like that...

PRESTON
Knock knock.

RACHEL
Please, no. My brother tells knock knock jokes... and he's 33.

PRESTON
You'll like this one.

Rachel pulls over to the side of the road. Grumbles loudly. Bangs her head against the steering wheel.

RACHEL
Who's there?

PRESTON
Toby.

She sits upright, gives Preston an "are you kidding me" look.

RACHEL
Toby who?

PRESTON
Toby or not Toby. That is the question.
EXT. PRESTON'S HOME - NIGHT

Rachel's truck pulls up in front of a gorgeous white colonial home. It boasts impressive columns, plantation shutters and wrap around porch.

From the looks of it, it has either been well-maintained or lovingly restored.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR (STOPPED) - NIGHT

Rachel stares at the house in awe.

    RACHEL
    You live here?

    PRESTON
    Yep.

    RACHEL
    No. Way.

    PRESTON
    I take it you approve.

    RACHEL
    That's an understatement.

    PRESTON
    It was my grandmother's. My mum's mum. I inherited it along with the diner. She was always afraid the singing wasn't going to work out and I'd be homeless.

    RACHEL
    So that's why you came... to run the diner?

    PRESTON
    Mostly.

    RACHEL
    I'll get your bike.

She gets out of the truck and Preston follows soon after.

EXT. PRESTON'S HOME - NIGHT

Rachel lowers the tailgate. Preston joins her just in time to help get a bike out of the bed of the truck.
RACHEL
Do you ride this to work?

PRESTON
Sometimes. Why?

RACHEL
I think I may have almost run you over the other day.

PRESTON
Oh, right. That was you?

RACHEL
So you're one of those "eco friendly" "go green" people?

PRESTON
What if I am?

He gets on the bike, taps the handle bars.

PRESTON
Hop on. I'll give you a ride to the door.

He nods down the long driveway leading to the house.

RACHEL
I should get home.

PRESTON
Okay.

They share a short moment of weirdness before Rachel starts for her truck.

PRESTON
I wasn't just messing with Toby. I want to take you somewhere tomorrow.

RACHEL
I work.

PRESTON
Call in sick.

She slowly swings back around to face him. Very hesitant to respond.
RACHEL
Look, Preston... I don't... date. It's been fun hanging out with you, but --

PRESTON
Who said anything about a date?

RACHEL
I'm really tired. I'm just gonna go.

She opens the driver's door but pauses before getting in.

RACHEL
Thanks for your help... and lunch today... and getting me off the hook with Toby and... the sandwich... bye.

PRESTON
So this is a forever goodbye then?

She flashes him a somber smile then gets in the truck and pulls away.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rachel stands in the middle of the room with a clear shot of the work she and Preston did in the living room and through to the kitchen.

She shakes her head then goes into her bedroom and SLAMS the door.

INT. DANIEL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Daniel hobbles around the kitchen, impeded by the back brace and both arm casts. He struggles to pull the top off a can of soup.

A KNOCK on the door.

He slowly makes his way to the door and opens it to find -- Rachel standing in the hall holding up a bag of take-out.

RACHEL
Hungry?
DANIEL
Depends what's in the bag.

RACHEL
I come bearing Chinese food.

DANIEL
Bless you. Come in.

Daniel steps aside, allowing Rachel to enter. She leads the way to the living room and he follows along.

Rachel sits on the sofa, then unpacks the take-out containers onto the coffee table. Hands Daniel a set of chopsticks and takes one for herself.

RACHEL
You look... good.

DANIEL
Compared to what?

RACHEL
At least you still have your legs.

He picks up a take-out container and struggles with the chopsticks. Finally tosses them down and uses his fingers.

DANIEL
What're you doing here?

RACHEL
Isn't it obvious? Feeding the injured.

DANIEL
I know you better than the woman that gave birth to you. Something's up.

She takes a bite of food as a distraction.

DANIEL
You want me to guess? Okay, I'll guess. You want me to take your paint shift? You... killed someone and you want me to help you get rid of the body? Your --

RACHEL
There's this guy...
DANIEL
I was gonna guess that next. You have that "there's a guy" look.

RACHEL
It's not like you think... romantic... he's just... it's fun... and easy...

DANIEL
If this is about Toby, I'm gonna puke into my kung pao chicken.

RACHEL
Me, too. It's not Toby.

DANIEL
Fun and easy are good, right? What's the problem?

RACHEL
He asked me out.

She puts down the container she's eating from and picks up another. Takes a bite.

DANIEL
And you told him... ?

RACHEL
That I was working.

DANIEL
Which you're not.

RACHEL
Clearly.

DANIEL
Why'd you lie? Or is that why you're here? So I can tell you what's so completely obvious to everyone else?

RACHEL
Whatever you're about to say... you're wrong.

DANIEL
So prove me wrong. Go on the date.

Rachel switches food containers again.
DANIEL
You know I'm right.

RACHEL
Oh shut up before I break every bone you have left.

EXT. DINNER - DAY

Rachel walks up to the door to find a sign that reads: "CLOSED FOR FAMILY EMERGENCY".

She tries the door anyway but it's locked up tight.

She gets her phone out and dials.

RACHEL
I need your help... I don't care if you're at work... I need a phone number... Preston -- I don't know his last name... well, you found mine... some brother you are.

She walks back to her truck while chatting on the phone.

RACHEL
You're in the freaking FBI and you can't find someone's number without their last name?... no, I'm not stalking him, what kind of question is that?... no, you and Shawn are NOT having a talk with him... just forget I called.

She ends the call, drops the phone back into her pocket. Gets into her truck.

EXT. PRESTON'S HOME - DAY

Rachel walks down the long driveway mumbling under her breath.

RACHEL
I can't believe I'm doing this.

She stops at the door, goes to knock, stops. Then knocks. Waits. Knocks again. Nothing.

Frustrated, she sighs loudly, then walks back down the stairs.
PERRIN (O.S.)
Can I help you?

Rachel turns to find a pretty brunette, PERRIN (30s), in the doorway smiling warmly.

RACHEL
Hi, um... I was looking for...

PERRIN
You must be Rachel.

RACHEL
I guess he's not here. I'm just gonna...

She motions toward her truck, then starts away.

PERRIN
Come on in. He's in the kitchen. He'll be happy to see you.

RACHEL
Oh. Okay.

Rachel walks back up the stairs, taking in the woman's apparel. She wears a form fitting dress, tasteful make-up and has her hair in a casual up-do.

Rachel self consciously wraps her arms around herself.

Reaching the door, Perrin pries one of her hands away and pulls her in.

INT. PRESTON'S HOME - DAY

Perrin leads Rachel by the hand through the FOYER

while Rachel takes in the room. The white carpet under foot is a stark contrast to the elegant, rich burgundy colored walls.

A spiral staircase leads up to the second floor.

Perrin leads the way down a long corridor up ahead.

PERRIN
Look what I found.
They enter the --

KITCHEN

where Preston stands at an island assembling a veggie platter. He looks up, smiling pleasantly upon seeing Rachel.

PRESTON
You changed your mind?

RACHEL
Woman's perrogative, right?

Preston and Rachel share a long look.

Perrin releases Rachel's hand, headed for the back door.

PERRIN
I'll go let everyone know she's here.

Rachel glances out the big bay windows, sees a big group of people, including children. The color quickly drains from her face.

RACHEL
No... uh... I didn't realize there'd be so many people... and I'm not really...

She motions to Preston's attire -- a button down shirt and slacks.

RACHEL
Look at you... and look at me...

Preston and Perrin exchange a smirk.

RACHEL

PRESTON
Rachel, I have three sisters. You wanna change your clothes?

INT. PRESTON'S HOME - PERRIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rachel sits awkwardly on the bed while Perrin and two equally beautiful women, PENELlope and PEYTON (30s), stand in front of her.
PERRIN
I'm Perrin. I'll be giving you a rejuvenating avocado and mango deep cleansing facial treatment followed by make-up.

PENELOPE
I'm Penelope. I'll be doing your hair.

PEYTON
I'm Peyton and I'll be dressing you.

They wait for Rachel's reaction.
She sits like a deer caught in the headlights.

PERRIN
Where did we lose you?

RACHEL
I think I got your names.

The women exchange a look.

PENELOPE
Let's start at the beginning.

Penelope holds up a brush like they're at a trial and it's exhibit A.

PENELOPE
This is a brush. You pull it through your hair to remove tangles, smooth and add shine.

RACHEL
You know what's good for that, too? You pull it back into a rubber band and then you can't see the tangles.

She pulls the rubber band out of her hair, causing it to fall about her face -- a big tangled mess.

PERRIN
This is gonna be harder than I thought.

LATER
Rachel is seated at a vanity, although the three sisters
working on her simultaneously blocks her view of the mirror.

Penelope brushes out her wet hair.

Perrin spreads a thick green paste across her face.

Peyton waits with an outfit draped over her arm.

INT. PRESTON'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Preston assembles some sandwiches, then cuts them in half and arranges them on a platter.

A HAND taps him on the shoulder.

He turns to find --

A completely different Rachel.

She wears a short denim skirt and a white eyelet halter top. Her hair is done up in soft waves that flow down her back. She has very light make-up on, just enough to accentuate her natural beauty.

She smiles as Preston looks her over.

His eyes travel down her shapely legs to her feet. She wears the same shoes, a pair of ratty old Converse.

RACHEL
My feet were too big for your sisters' shoes.

He continues to stare, speechless.

She starts to fidget.

RACHEL
Say something. You're giving me a complex.

PRESTON
I'm just... shocked. There actually was a girl under all the paint and jeans.

She flashes him a half-hearted smile. Obviously not the response she was looking for.
PRESTON
Okay, I'm almost done here and then we'll go out back and get the painful part over with.

Preston gets back to the food while Rachel walks to the bay windows and stares out.

RACHEL
You mean the make-over wasn't the painful part?

PRESTON
Not even close. My family... they mean well but they can be a bit... suffocating.

RACHEL'S POV
Perrin, Penelope and Peyton sit at a large patio table with their husbands and an older couple. The women's seemingly effortless beauty intensifies in the sunlight.

Eight CHILDREN, dressed in their Sunday best, play in the wide open grassy field nearby. All getting along.

The perfect family.

RACHEL
Your sister's don't have accents.

Preston looks in her direction but finds her focused out the window. Turns back to his food preparation.

PRESTON
Our parents split when we were kids. Our mum missed home so she and the girls moved back. Someone had to take care of our dad...

RACHEL
So you didn't grow up together?

PRESTON
We took turns visiting every year. Called. Wrote. Now, thanks to technology, we email.

RACHEL
They don't live here?
PRESTON
Chicago, actually. We get
together like this a couple times a year.

RACHEL
Are they all married?

PRESTON
Married with a couple ankle-biters a piece.

Rachel finally looks away from the window, meets Preston's gaze.

RACHEL
Dogs?

PRESTON
Children, although they're not always that well behaved. At times they could pass for animals.

He puts the finishing touches on a cheese tray.

PRESTON
Shall we?

She meets him at the kitchen island, takes the sandwich platter.

Preston picks up the other two.

PRESTON
How should I introduce you?

RACHEL
Rachel.

He smiles at the misunderstanding.

EXT. PRESTON'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Perrin moves around the table, refilling everyone's glass with what looks like lemonade.

PERRIN
They make such a cute couple.

PENELOPE
Now that she looks like a girl.
PEYTON
Oh stop. It wasn't that bad.

As Rachel and Preston approach, they switch into alternate conversation mode.

PERRIN
Did I tell you guys that Abby was chosen to read her short story in front of the whole school?

One of the guys, SPENCER, speaks up.

SPENCER
She's got her mother's flair for the dramatic, so obviously she's a natural born writer.

Preston and Rachel silently put the food on the table, not wanting to interrupt.

The older woman, GRACE (50s), looks their way.

GRACE
Well, we were wondering when you two were gonna show yourselves.

PRESTON
Everybody, this is Rachel.

Everyone gets to their feet.

Grace is the first to walk over to Rachel. Hugs her unexpectedly.

It takes Rachel a second to hug back.

PRESTON
Uh, the woman hugging you is my mum, Grace.

Grace finally releases her and steps back.

GRACE
Lovely to meet you, sweetie.

RACHEL
You, too.

Preston motions toward the older male, JOHN.

PRESTON
This is her husband, John.
John steps forward for a hug.

Rachel is even more taken aback than she was with Grace.

JOHN
Notice how he didn't say step-dad.
I've been married to his mom for thirteen years and he still doesn't like me.

Preston smiles at him and John pats his back.

PRESTON
You've already met my sisters.

PERRIN
But we still want a hug.

The three women encircle Rachel in a group hug.

PRESTON
And these are my brothers-in-law... or is it my brother-in-laws?

While Preston contemplates, the three men, Spencer, CONRAD and DONALD come forward to claim their hugs.

CONRAD
I'm Conrad. I'm with Peyton.

SPENCER
I'm Spencer... married to Perrin.

DONALD
And I'm Donald. And Peyton is my lovely wife.

By the end of the introductions, Rachel appears to have reached her yearly hug quota.

They all exchange a "now what" look followed by a long silence.

PRESTON
Oh and those are the ankle-biters I was telling you about.

He motions into the field where the children still play.
PRESTON
I can never remember their names
so I refer to them as A, B, C, D,
E, F, G and H.

GRACE
He's not kidding, either.

PERRIN
Abigail, Brendan, Caitlyn, Derek,
Elsa, Felicia, Gianna and Henry.
All the girls are mine.

RACHEL
Did you guys plan that?

The sisters giggle.

PEYTON
If you haven't noticed, we like to
play name games.

GRACE
Do you have any siblings, Rachel?

RACHEL
Yeah... uh... two brothers.

GRACE
Oh my, they must have you spoiled
rotten.

Rachel can do little more than flash a polite smile.

GRACE
What do they think of Preston?
They must be pretty protective of
you... their only sister.

Rachel looks to Preston for help but he is too interested in
the answer to oblige.

RACHEL
Uh... no... not really.

GRACE
I'm sure your mom must love him,
though, right? All moms love him.

Grace taps Preston lovingly on the cheek. He smiles
politely, then turns to Rachel to find her drowning in
discomfort.
RACHEL
She... I don't... we're not...

PRESTON
Okay, enough with the French Inquisition. Let's eat.

LATER
Rachel sits transfixed, watching the women interact with their spouses and each other.

Preston hands out plates of pie, kissing each sister and his mom on the cheek as he goes.

A piece of pie suddenly appears in front of her. She looks over to see --

John easing into the seat beside her with his own slice of pie.

She accepts hers with a gracious smile.

RACHEL
Thanks.

JOHN
I had that same look on my face the first time I was invited to one of these. It's a little... overwhelming, isn't it?

She tastes her pie. Motions "a little bit" with her thumb and finger.

JOHN
I'll share my secret. You need to befriend someone on the inside and you agree on a signal. Nose scratch, yawn, hair twirl... so they'll know when to rescue you. I'm thinking... left ear pull.

He demonstrates.

RACHEL
Who was your go to person?

John nods at Preston who now delivers pie to the children, holding it over their heads and laughing as they jump for it.
JOHN
I'm sure you already know this, but he's one-of-a-kind.

PERRIN (O.S.)
John, stop hogging Rachel.

Rachel takes her eyes off Preston to find Perrin, Peyton and Penelope closing in on her.

JOHN
She's not a shiny new toy, girls.

He stands up, allowing Perrin to slide into his seat.

PERRIN
Of course she is.

Peyton and Penelope pull up a chair and sit.

JOHN
Well, in that case, play nice and take turns. And don't break her.

PEYTON
We won't.

PENELOPE
We'll try anyway.

John walks away.

As soon as he's out of hearing distance, the women all converge on Rachel at once.

PERRIN
Where did you and Preston meet?

PEYTON
How long have you been going out?

PENELOPE
I can't wait to plan your wedding.

Perrin and Peyton give Penelope a stern look.

PENELOPE
What?

PERRIN
You're breaking her.
Rachel glances over their shoulders to find Preston cleaning up the dessert dishes. She sits up alertly, newfound hope.

    RACHEL
    I can help you with those.

Preston starts for the house, regarding her over his shoulder.

    PRESTON
    I've got it. Relax. Chat. And watch out for the little one. She bites.

Penelope, the petite one of the group, frowns.

    PENELope
    I do not.

INT. PRESTON'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Preston stands at the sink cleaning up, a close eye on Rachel who is now surrounded by all eight children.

John comes up behind him with more dishes. Hands them over.

    PRESTON
    Think she's okay?

    JOHN
    I've had my eye on her all day. She hasn't tugged her ear once.

    PRESTON
    You gave her a signal? Brilliant. And she hasn't used it yet?

    JOHN
    This one's got potential.

John pats Preston on the back, then walks away.

EXT. PRESTON'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Preston steps out of the house and looks around. Doesn't see Rachel anywhere. Walks to the patio table where the group has moved from lemonade to wine and raucous laughter.

    PRESTON
    What did you guys do with Rachel?
They all look around, surprised to not see her there.

PERRIN
She was just here a minute ago. We were talking about her job.

Preston's expression goes from mildly concerned to intensely worried.

The family members watch him as he gazes around for Rachel, then go back to their drinks and conversation when he walks off.

Preston walks around the side of the house, into the FRONT YARD

Takes note that Rachel's truck is still on the curb.

Almost out of options, he goes around the other side of the house.

Finds Rachel sitting on the ground smoking a cigarette. Her old clothes are folded in her lap. Not a good sign.

PRESTON
Taking a break?

RACHEL
I didn't want the kids to see me smoking. Just say no and all that.

He walks up to her, squats down, takes a drag of her cigarette. Hands it back.

PRESTON
You're doing great. They usually settle down after they've eaten.

He smiles and nudges her but she's not in a playful mood.

PRESTON
If they said anything about your job, it's only because --

RACHEL
They were cool about my job. A lot better than my family were.

PRESTON
Then what is it?
RACHEL
I wanted a damn cigarette.

Now he knows something is wrong.

Rachel puts out her cigarette.

PRESTON
Are you leaving?

Rachel gets to her feet and heads for her truck, dusting the
dirt and debris off her skirt.

PRESTON
You lasted longer than I thought
you would so...

She halts her escape, turns to him.

RACHEL
Is that a dig?

PRESTON
No, it's a compliment. Why do you
always assume everyone is thinking
the worst of you?

RACHEL
Because they usually are.

PRESTON
This would be a lot easier if you
would just give me the benefit of
the doubt.

She heads off for her truck.

Preston jogs to catch up.

PRESTON
I know they came on a little
strong, but --

RACHEL
A little strong? Penelope wants
to plan our wedding!

PRESTON
They like you. It's a good thing.
Would you have preferred if they
were rude?
Yeah. Maybe. At least it would have felt more... familiar...

She keeps walking without an answer.

He catches up, grabs her arm, pulls her to a stop.

Talk to me.

If it wasn't already glaringly apparent before that we come from two different planets, it definitely is now. You're Preston, from the planet Neptune, the home of perfect family bliss. And I'm motherless Rachel who doesn't know how to give or receive hugs. Your world is too pretty to have me in it.

Preston is taken aback. Takes him a second to reply.

I didn't know about your mum. You never talk about your family.

There's a reason for that.

They reach an impasse. Neither know what to say.

She steps back. Points at her attire.

Your sisters dressed me up like a freaking Barbie doll.

Because you were uncomfortable.

I was... I was uncomfortable... but instead of assuring me that it didn't matter what I was wearing, you sicked your sisters on me so I could blend in.
PRESTON
I wasn't trying to change you, Rachel. I like you just as much plain as I do now.

RACHEL
Plain?

PRESTON
I didn't...
Preston tilts his head back and sends a frustrated little growl up into the atmosphere.

PRESTON
God, you're so frustrating... and fascinating all at the same time.

Rachel unlocks her truck and gets into the driver's seat.

INT. RACHEL'S TRUCK (STOPPED) - DAY
Preston gets into the passenger seat, causing Rachel to sigh and firmly grip the steering wheel.

PRESTON
You stay for the insult, but flee from the compliment.

RACHEL
I don't want to do this. This... talking... thing. Feelings and compromising.
(beat)
You say I'm fascinating and I know you're lying. There is nothing fascinating about me. I have been called a lot of things, but that's never been one of them.

PRESTON
That's the problem right there. You've obviously been hanging out with the wrong people.

RACHEL
My family may be the most dysfunctional group of people to walk the Earth but at least I don't feel like a stranger when I'm around them. I know exactly who I am.
PRESTON
And I thought MY family was suffocating. Yours has you in such a tiny little box you can barely take a deep breath. But I can see the appeal. It must be a small relief being around people that have no expectations of you, that don't care what you're doing with your life or if you finish any of the things you start.

She starts the truck, revs the engine.

RACHEL
Are we done here?

He opens the door. Hesitates before getting out.

PRESTON
Bye, Rachel. It was nice almost knowing you.

He gets out of the truck and Rachel peels off down the road.

EXT. PRESTON'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY
Preston comes around the side of the house to see --

His family just as he left them, laughing and having a great time.

He slowly walks over to them, looking defeated. Picks up a glass of wine and drowns his sorrows.

Grace rubs his arm lovingly and he gives her a half-hearted smile.

INT. RACHEL'S TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT
Rachel tries to focus on the road but her reflection in the rear view mirror is a constant distraction.

She suddenly pulls over on the side of the road, gets a napkin out of her glove box and violently smudges the make-up off.

She takes the rubber band off her wrist and puts her hair into a messy ponytail.

She slides her jeans on under the skirt, then pulls the
skirt off. Does the same with her T-shirt. Tosses the skirt and halter top out the window and drives off.

INT. PRESTON'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Preston sits on the sofa playing a song on his guitar.

His whole family is gathered around listening. The women cuddle with their husbands.

SERIES OF SHOTS - STARTING OVER

A) Rachel primes over the paint samples on all of her walls, leaving a blank slate.

B) She takes down the unlevel cabinets in the kitchen.

C) She pries off the crooked molding in the living room.

D) She violently cracks the fireplace tile with a sledgehammer.

E) She sledgehammers the bathroom floor tile.

F) She sinks to the floor, out of breath, sobbing.

END MUSIC

INT. DINER - DAY

Preston stands at the register making change for a customer.

The bell JINGLES, signaling new customers.

He looks over to find Toby, Stu, Janice and Foster making their way to their "usual" table. Toby has his arm around a girl that, from behind, looks just like Rachel.

PRESTON
(to customer)
Have a nice day.

He hurries off before the customer can respond. Heads straight for Toby's table. Takes a good look at the Rachel look-a-like. Relieved that it's not Rachel.

Seeing him looking, Toby tightens his arm around his new lady friend, JADE.

PRESTON
Hey, guys. The usual?
Everyone nods their head except Jade.

JADE
Can I see a menu?

Preston smiles.

TOBY
She'll have the same as me.

Jade looks put off until Toby whispers in her ear.

JADE
Oh. Okay.

She lets out a little annoying giggle. Very girly.

TOBY
How's Rachel?

Preston smiles politely, then starts off.

PRESTON
I'll be right back with your drinks.

Toby jumps up and follows with Jade looking after him, confused.

JADE
Who's Rachel?

Toby catches up with Preston at the counter.

TOBY
I take it you haven't heard from her either.

PRESTON
You work with her. You would know better than me how she's doing.

Preston positions five glasses on the counter and begins filling them with ice and soda.

TOBY
She hasn't been to work in months.

Preston looks up from the sodas, trying hard not to show concern. Looks back down.
PRESTON
If you're worried, I suggest you give her a call.

TOBY
I tried. She hung up on me 27 times... and that was just today.

Preston smirks to himself, shakes his head.

TOBY
What'd you do to her?

PRESTON
I gave her what she wanted.

TOBY
You know, Rachel isn't like other women. She doesn't always say what she means.

PRESTON
She was pretty clear.

TOBY
She's been on her own since she was seventeen. Just because she never asks for help, doesn't mean she couldn't use it.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rachel sits on a sofa covered with a sheet eating from a whole chocolate cake with a fork. She stares across the room at the empty spot where a television should be.

Her phone RINGS off the hook. Machine finally picks up.

DANIEL (V.O.)
(on machine)
I know you're there. Pick up.

INTERCUT - HANK'S HARDWARE STORE / RACHEL'S APARTMENT

Daniel sits behind the paint counter, cast-free, looking bored out of his mind.

DANIEL

She shovels more cake into her mouth. Chews as she goes to pick up the phone.
RACHEL
God, can't a girl eat her cake in peace?

DANIEL
(on machine)
When are you coming back? You've been on vacation for years.

She finally picks up.

RACHEL
It's only been a few months. And there's always sick leave when my vacation runs out.

DANIEL
I hope you're getting lots done. Meanwhile I'm dying of boredom over here. People are actually asking intelligent paint questions. It's no fun anymore... especially without you.

She looks around the living room. She is surrounded in supplies but no cosmetic changes have been made.

RACHEL
I'm practically done. What's new at Hank's?

DANIEL
Same shit, different day.
(beat)
Your brother was in here looking for you. He said your phone was broken or something.

RACHEL
That's because I haven't been answering it. Did he look more like an FBI agent or bartender?

DANIEL
Uh, FBI. He said to tell you that he missed you.

RACHEL
That was an imposter. My brother would never say that.
DANIEL
He also said he knows where you live.

RACHEL
(smiling)
Now that sounds like him.

Daniel takes a can of paint out of the mixer, pries it open, puts a dab of paint onto the lid. A pretty light blue shade. Hammers it shut.

DANIEL
Listen, I got a customer. I'll call you back.

RACHEL
Okay.

Daniel hangs up, then slides the can of paint across the counter to a customer we don't see.

DANIEL
Too easy.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Rachel unlocks a door that reads: "STORAGE - RESIDENTS ONLY" and flips on a light. Enters.

She passes through mazes of boxes and miscellaneous clutter until locating a stack of boxes with her name on it.

She unstacks them until finding a box that is labeled: "CLOTHES". She tears into the box and rummages through the various articles of clothing until coming across a pretty satin dress.

She holds it up against herself, looking down. Unsure.

MATCH CUT:

EXT. AUGUSTUS HOME - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Rachel now has the dress on, waiting outside her family's door. Although she doesn't look as glamorous as Preston's sisters made her, she looks pretty. A happy medium.

She RINGS the doorbell.
INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Brian, Cooper and Shawn sit at their usual spots in front of the TV.

ON SCREEN

A thin, shapely YOGA INSTRUCTOR in a skin-tight outfit leads a class of similarly clothed women.

BACK TO SCENE

The men tilt their heads in unison as the yoga women perform a complex pose.

    SHAWN
    That looks... painful.

The doorbell CHIMES again but then men are too preoccupied to notice.

    MARGE (O.S.)
    Is someone going to get that?

    COOPER
    How long can they stay like that before gravity takes over?

The doorbell CHIMES again repeatedly.

Shawn finally stands up.

    SHAWN
    Okay, okay. Shit.

He goes over to the door and opens it, surprised to find -- Rachel standing there, looking very unlike herself.

His mouth falls open.

She can't help but smile.

    RACHEL
    Am I too late for dinner?

    SHAWN
    Who are you and why would you willingly choose to eat dinner here?

    RACHEL
    Can I come in?
He holds the door open for her and watches, still in shock, as she walks through the living room and over to the sofa.

MARGE (O.S.)
Who was at the door?

Cooper and Brian look up, have the same reaction as Shawn.

SHAWN
Rachel... I think. But she looks like a girl.

Rachel flashes him a wry look, then goes up behind Brian, wraps her arms around his neck, gives him a kiss on the cheek.

RACHEL
Hi, dad.

BRIAN
Welcome back.

After an extended hug, she turns to find Shawn and Cooper right behind her. She looks terrified for a moment, then --

Shawn throws her over his shoulder and Cooper gives her a noogie.

INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marge opens the oven door and pulls out a roast that is burnt to a crisp. She frowns at it before placing it onto the stove top.

She closes the oven door then tries to cut into the roast with a sharp knife, but it's like trying to cut into a brick.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Can I help?

Marge glances over her shoulder, then does a double take at Rachel's much changed attire.

MARGE
You look... pretty.

RACHEL
Do you have another one of those?

Rachel motions toward Marge's over-the-top, hand-crafted apron.
Marge beams with pride, going into a drawer and pulling out an identical apron. She hands it to Rachel.

Rachel slides into the apron and Marge ties it for her.

MARGE
I made an extra. I knew one day you'd come around.

INT. AUGUSTUS HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Brian, Marge, Shawn, Cooper and Rachel sit around the dinner table. They each have a beautifully garnished plate in front of them with a simple sandwich in the center.

Everyone seems to be enjoying their dinner.

SHAWN
(mouth full)
I think this is the best sandwich I've ever had.

COOPER
(mouth full)
Can we let Rachel cook from now on?

RACHEL
Cooper!

MARGE
No, he's right. I may have...

Everyone waits on the edge of their seats.

MARGE
... burned a few dishes over the years.

COOPER
And undercooked a few.

MARGE
Yes, Cooper, and undercooked a few. But I think --

SHAWN
And given us salmonella... sixteen times.

Everyone laughs but Marge. She struggles to see the humor.
BRIAN
Don't forget the crab meat that almost killed Shawn.

Marge has a slight smile on her face.

MARGE
That was my first meal in this house. How was I to know he was allergic to crab?

COOPER
And Rachel's cracked tooth.

They're all laughing now. A much different family.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The ELEVATOR doors DING open and Rachel exits, dragging her feet, looking exhausted. She proceeds down the corridor toward her apartment but stops suddenly upon seeing --

Preston sitting in front of her door.

She stares at him, squinting.

RACHEL
I must really be tired. I'm hallucinating.

Preston slowly gets to his feet. There is a can of paint beside him.

PRESTON
I'm not a figment of your imagination.

RACHEL
I'll be the judge of that.

She closes in the distance between them. Stops just inches from him. Pokes him hard in the chest.

PRESTON
Ow.

RACHEL
Okay. You're real. And I'm really tired. Can we not do this right now?
She pushes past him and reaches into her purse for her keys. Kicks the can of paint. Looks down.

RACHEL
What's that?

PRESTON
Have you been away from work that long? It's paint.

RACHEL
Most guys would bring a girl... flowers... or wine...

PRESTON
You're not just any girl.

Preston ducks down to look into her eyes. She smiles briefly, then looks away. He takes her by the chin and lifts her head back up.

PRESTON
I'm trying here.

RACHEL
I can see that, but I've just had this surreal night with my family and I don't think I could handle any more... weirdness...

PRESTON
What is so weird about a guy you broke up with whom you weren't really even technically dating showing up at your door at six in the morning with a can of paint and asking to come in and help you redecorate?

As his gaze becomes more penetrable, her unease increases.

RACHEL
I don't do... sorry... well. So I try never to be wrong, but...

Preston pulls her to him and silences her with a kiss. Leaves her breathless and speechless.

PRESTON
Can I come in?
RACHEL
You can... but the paint stays out here.

PRESTON
Are you seriously turning down my color expertise?

RACHEL
I think I'm gonna sell the place. Start off fresh. Someplace already finished.

Preston chuckles to himself.

RACHEL
What?

PRESTON
Nothing. I just think I know the perfect place.

She slides her key into the lock and enters her apartment.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rachel takes a step into the apartment and is instantly greeted by --

Grace, John, Perrin, Penelope, Peyton, Donald, Spencer, Conrad, Marge, Brian, Cooper, Shawn, Toby, Jade, Janice, Daniel, Stu, Foster, and Hank.

They are all wearing ratty old clothes, even Preston's sisters.

Rachel turns to take in the guilty look on Preston's face.

RACHEL
Why is everyone we know in my living room?

DANIEL
We thought you could use a little... or a lot... of help.

Rachel looks around for the first time.

Her living room is completely finished. It looks exactly like the sketch in Rachel's book.

She stares in awe, then hurries into the --
KITCHEN

to find it completed as well. Cabinets all hung and level, hard wood flooring, beautiful stone backsplash, granite
countertops. The works.

She walks back into the --

LIVING ROOM

Still in shock, eyes wide, mouth ajar.

RACHEL
How did... who... when... someone
start talking.

TOBY
Well, I thought that you might
need help...

PRESTON
So he came to me and I went to
Daniel...

DANIEL
Then I tracked down your family
and got your brothers in on it...

SHAWN
And all we had to do was keep you
away from here for a few hours...

COOPER
Then jump in my car and beat you
here...

BRIAN
Luckily you made a stop along the
way because Cooper drives like an
old lady.

Cooper turns to Brian, offended.

COOPER
I do not. Following the rules of
the road is not only responsible,
it's --

PRESTON
What stop did you make?

She slowly turns to him, fidgety, struggling with the words.
RACHEL
I... went... I was... in the neighborhood, so...

PRESTON
You went to see me?

RACHEL
Yes. I went to see you.

He smiles, impressed. Pulls her in for a kiss.

PENELOPE
Preston, maybe you should show her the bedroom.

Peyton and Perrin elbow her from both directions.

PENELOPE
Just sayin'.

PRESTON
Shall we?

Preston puts out his hand and Rachel accepts. He leads her through the living room and down a short hallway. Stops outside the bedroom door.

He turns to find the whole group behind them.

PRESTON
You mind?

They all step back, try to find something to occupy themselves.

PENELOPE
We'll just wait out here.

PRESTON
Good idea.

RACHEL
What's the big secret?

PRESTON
This was my contribution.

He puts his hand on the doorknob, starts to turn it.

RACHEL
Wait, they let you work on my bedroom? Are you guys nuts? Is it even safe to walk in? Am I (MORE)
RACHEL (cont'd)
gonna fall into a big hole in the floor?

He turns the knob and swings the door open.

Rachel cautiously peeks in. Hand instantly goes to her mouth.

BEDROOM

It looks like something out of a magazine. Gorgeous cherry wood floors, dark wood furniture, soft blue walls, a platform king sized bed and an over-sized leather headboard.

The bed is dressed in a luxurious silver bedspread. The same color can be found in the flowing draperies.

A series of white candles are lit throughout the room.

Rachel takes it all in, speechless. Walks over to the bed, runs her fingers across the fabric.

Preston approaches her, rubs her back.

Tears run down Rachel's face.

PRESTON
Are those tears?

She laughs, wipes away the tears, turns to face him.

RACHEL
I've been doing it a lot lately. I don't know what's wrong with me.

He helps her remove the remaining moisture from her cheeks.

PRESTON
Too bad you're moving.

RACHEL
I might hold off on that.

PRESTON
Thought you might.

She turns to glance at the room full of people hovering just outside the bedroom door. Then back at Preston.

RACHEL
How do I thank them? Why did they... how can I...
PRESTON
I see you're as out of practice
with "thank you" as you are with
"I'm sorry".

RACHEL
Help a girl out?

PRESTON
We'll thank them together. But
first...

He swings the door shut, then takes her in his arms and
plants a kiss on her lips.

EXT. DINER - DAY
A sign on the door reads: "CLOSED FOR FAMILY CELEBRATION".
LOUD CONVERSATION can be heard from inside.

INT. DINER - DAY
Several tables have been pushed together, holding all the
people that were previously at Rachel's apartment.
Empty plates sit in front of them after a well deserved
breakfast.
Preston and Rachel go around the table filling the glasses
with champagne.

MARGE
Isn't it a little early for
champagne?

RACHEL
We've been up all night. It
doesn't count.

Rachel arrives at Perrin, tries to fill her glass.
Perrin places her hand over her glass.

PERRIN
None for me. I'm not allowed to
drink... for a while...

Everyone smiles knowingly.
PEYTON
Perrin, Jesus, you guys need to get a hobby.

SHAWN
Or another hobby.

PENELOPE
I'm planning your baby shower!

RACHEL
Congratulations.

Rachel wraps her arms around Perrin for a quick hug.

PRESTON
To new beginnings.

All the glasses go up in the air.

ALL
To new beginnings.

GLASSES CLINK. Couples kiss. Conversations resume.

Preston and Rachel share a look across the table.

FADE OUT.